

# Rubella (aka, German Measles)

Rubella is a childhood viral disease, which causes a rash, low-grade fever and swollen glands in the area behind the ears. Some children may have a very mild illness with no rash at all. However, if a pregnant woman without protection against rubella is exposed to the disease, there could be harmful effects to her baby. **Pregnant women should consult their physician at once if they have been exposed to rubella!**

## Who gets this disease?

Some young adults remain susceptible to rubella due to high school graduation prior to the school rubella vaccination laws. Rubella is most often seen in unimmunized children and in this susceptible adolescent and young adult group.

## How is it spread?

The virus is spread by large droplets spread through the air from sneezing or coughing, or by direct contact with infected nasal or saliva secretions.

## What are the symptoms?

1. A two to three day rash that begins on the face and quickly spreads downward over the entire body.
2. A low-grade fever of 101-degrees Fahrenheit or less.
3. Swollen glands behind ears. (Note: This may appear before the rash.)
4. Symptoms appear 14-23 days after exposure.

Infected persons are contagious from one week **before** to seven days after the appearance of the rash. A small percentage of properly immunized children may be infected with rubella because sometimes vaccines fail.

## How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

The National Immunization Practices Advisory Committee (ACIP) recommends that children be immunized against rubella after 12-months-of-age. This immunization is usually combined with measles and mumps vaccine given between 12- to 15-months-of-age.

## Who should be excluded?

A child or staff member with rubella or suspect rubella should not return to day care until seven days after the onset of rash.

## Reportable?

Yes, rubella (suspect or confirmed) is reportable **immediately** by New Hampshire law.